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THE  
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MIRIAM SEELEY



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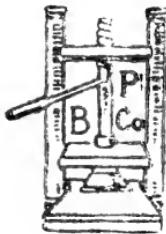


# The Spirit-Mother

AND OTHER POEMS

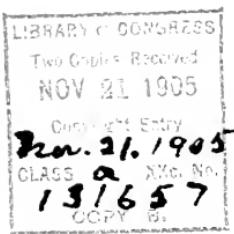
By

MIRIAM SHEFFEY



BROADWAY PUBLISHING  
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xx

GREGORY SHERIFFEY.

3 v. (1905-1908)

To the Memory  
of  
My Beautiful Mother  
who  
Filled My Life with Love and Joy



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## The Spirit-Mother.



## The Spirit-Mother.

By permission of the Taylor Publishing  
Company, Nashville.

**J** HEAR the sound of her soft old shoes  
As she toils up the shadowy stair.  
I hear her open my chamber door,—  
Yet I know she is not there.

I see the tears in her gentle eyes,  
The shine of her beautiful hair,  
The pitying love in her sweet old face,—  
Yet I know she is not there.

I see the folds of her worn black gown  
As she sits in the rocking-chair,  
And lovingly, tenderly bends o'er my bed,—  
Yet I know she is not there.

Oh, the cadences sweet of her soft old voice!  
Naught have I now to fear,  
For I feel the touch of her hand of love!—  
Yet I know she is not here.

"My dear little, poor little suffering one!

    My precious! My baby! My own!"

She is saying,—I hear them, those old, old  
    words!

Yet I know I am all alone.

## Sleeping.



## Sleeping.

By permission of the *New York Observer*,  
New York.

INTO the dim old parlor  
With bated breath I go,—  
The quaint old room whose curtained gloom  
She once did know.

'Tis here that she was christened,  
Was loved and wooed and wed,  
And here to-night in robes of white  
She lieth dead.

About her snowy draperies  
The pallid moon-flowers twine.  
Her little head is garlanded  
With jessamine.

A rose sleeps in her fingers  
And lilies kiss her brow.  
Her weary life of grief and strife  
Is over now.

The waxen candles' radiance  
Upon her bosom lies,  
**H**er shining hair, her face so fair,  
Her veiled eyes.

Into the solemn silence  
With bleeding heart I go.  
Would I could die! Bereft am I  
Who loved her so!

Yet why should there be mourning?  
Why bitter words be said  
When after years of toil and tears  
She lieth dead?

Not dead, but only sleeping.  
A sweet and blest surprise  
For her awaits where ope the gates  
Of Paradise.

For her, no more of weeping,  
No more of burning pain,  
No ill, no sorrow, no sad to-morrow,  
No sin or stain.

The rough and thorny pathway  
Her patient feet have trod  
With blood is red, but it hath led  
Her up to God.

Out from the dim old parlor  
With faltering steps I go,—  
The quaint old room whose curtained gloom  
She never more will know.



## The Triumph.



## The Triumph.

By permission of the *Christian Observer*,  
Louisville.

**J** AM so glad to die! Didst thou in  
truth believe  
That I should look with dread upon  
Death's coming?

Ah, no! With joy, not fear, I do receive  
This Messenger, and like a homing  
Dove, I feel within my breast  
A hope of peace, of never-ending rest.

I am so glad to die! My days have been re-  
plete  
With toil and pain, regret and bitter  
weeping.

But all will soon be past. My wearied feet  
And aching heart will find in sleeping  
Surcease from sorrow. Blessed thought!  
It is for this that I so long have fought.

I am so glad to die! Then wherefore  
should'st thou mourn?

This is no time for tears, so hush thy  
crying.

Remember all the burdens I have borne!

Thou shouldst rejoice that I am dying.  
My little one, why be dismayed?  
It is for this that I so long have prayed.

I am so glad to die! No more can I endure.  
In throes of struggling agony I languish.  
God knows my pain,—I trust His promise  
sure.

No matter what may be my anguish,  
Yet still within my mind I keep  
This thought, “He giveth His beloved  
sleep.”

I am so glad to die! High up in air I hear  
An angel host in chorus sweetly singing,  
And mingling with the seraph song the  
clear,

Pure notes of heavenly harps are ringing.  
How good, how sweet it is to die!  
Thank God for peace! My little one, good-  
bye!

Yesterday.



## **Yesterday.**

THEY said that I must go away, beloved,  
when you died,  
Away from the old home your life and love  
had glorified.  
They said I must not live alone in this  
house so great and grim,  
With haunted rooms and corridors all si-  
lent, sad and dim.  
They said that I must not be left to tread  
these ghostly ways,  
To mourn through desolated nights and  
desolated days.

But only in this hallowed home can I con-  
tent ed be,  
This home made dear and beautiful by your  
white memory.  
These ancient rooms and passages, to others  
grim and gray,  
For me are radiant with the light and love  
of yesterday.

Across the gloom the shining of an angel  
face I see,  
And hear, through sombre silences, a soft  
voice calling me.

O who can know, my dearest one? O who  
can understand  
How, through the fragrant summer dusk,  
together, hand-in-hand,  
Along these sacred garden-ways we wander,  
you and I,  
While dew-wet blossoms gently dream and  
winds go whispering by?

One spot is holier to my heart than all the  
rest beside,—  
The bright old room, the white old room,  
the room in which you died.  
And only I can enter there! No other  
understands  
The sound of spirit-footsteps or the touch of  
spirit-hands.

O who can understand, dear love? O how  
can others know  
That all my joy is dreaming of the joy of  
long ago?

## The Old Church Organ.



## The Old Church Organ.

By permission of the *Christian Observer*,  
Louisville.

**F**AR back in the desolate basement,  
Where darkling shadows lie,  
Where cobwebs white festoon the walls,  
Where human footstep seldom falls,  
Where turbulent rats hold constant sway,  
Where night is ever the same as day,  
They have left me alone to die.

Was it yesterday that they bore me  
Down the narrow winding stair,  
Away from the joy, the song, the light,  
Into the misery, terror and night?  
Away from the music's melodious strain,  
Into the loneliness, yearning and pain?  
Was it then they brought me here?

The hours are slow in passing!

I lose all count of time.

It seems like long, long weary years

Since they hid me away in this place of  
fears.

O why was I taken from joys untold?

O why was I brought to this prison cold,  
I, who have done no crime?

They say I have grown old-fashioned.

I am shabby and out of date.

My voice is cracked and my notes *will* stick.

I am wornout and wheezy and stiff and sick.  
I have been fine enough in my day, so 'tis  
said,

But in *this* church I never again shall be  
played!

O pitiless, pitiless fate!

"Yes, old, very old," they are saying,

And yet I feel as young,

As ready for chant and psalm and hymn,

For wedding gay or funeral grim,—

As eager to lift my voice on high

As I did on that Sabbath morn when my

Inaugural song was sung.

I have been so true and faithful!

In patience, in love I have worked.

I have whispered of mercy to those who  
were sad.

I have shouted for joy with those who were  
glad.

At Christmas and Easter and Thanksgiving  
time

I have mingled my voice with the mellow  
chime.

No service have I shirked.

Yet yesterday I was forsaken!

And never a tear was shed!

Never a soothing word they spoke

To comfort the poor old heart they broke!

I heard no sympathetic sigh,

No whispered grief, no soft goodbye!

Never a word they said!

I am out of all sight and all hearing.

Another has taken my place.

Another will join with the worshipping  
throng

In jubilant chorus, in sweet solemn song.

Another of workmanship noble and fine  
With voice far more mighty and mellow  
than mine  
Will tell of God's wonderful grace.

I know there is one who remembers  
My blessed, my triumphant days.  
'Tis she 'neath whose fingers so slender, so  
skilled,  
My soul was awakened, my spirit was  
thrilled.  
Together we've worked through the golden  
years.  
Together we've laughed, together shed tears.  
Together we've told His praise.

In silence I'm waiting and longing  
For the touch of her magical hand.  
She will kiss with her fingers my yellowed  
old keys,  
And no matter how much I tremble and  
wheeze,  
By the force and the power of her glorious  
art,  
She will bring from the depths of my pul-  
sating heart  
A symphony rich and grand.

Perhaps she will come to-morrow,  
My lady sweet and fair.  
Perhaps in a passion of yearning love  
She will steal away from the light above,—  
Perhaps when the service is o'er she will  
    slip  
Apart from the shining crowd, and trip  
    Down the narrow winding stair.

O hasten thy coming, my lady!  
    For Death is very nigh!  
O hasten, and bring to this piteous place  
The shine of thy presence, the light of thy  
    face!  
O hasten, my lady, and make me rejoice  
With the touch of thy fingers, the sound of  
    thy voice,  
Just once, only once ere I die!



## The Message.



## The Massage.

(To a Sprained Ankle.)

By permission of the *Christian Observer*,  
Louisville.

THEY give you a tug and a twist, little  
foot,

A pinch, a jerk, and a pull.

They give you a wrench and a thrust till  
your cup

Of tragical sorrow is full.

You think they are needlessly harsh, little  
foot.

You think they are cruel and mean.

You cannot see why you should have to en-  
dure

This pain so unbearably keen.

Many times you have wished you were dead,  
little foot,

In a daisy-starred grave cool and deep,

Where your agony over forever and aye,

You would sweetly, deliciously sleep.

Had you lungs, you would loudly protest,  
little foot,

Had you eyes you would piteously weep,  
But, alas! there is no way for you to make  
known

This anguish so bitter, so deep.

O tired little foot! Be patient and brave.

There is always a purpose in pain.

This fiery trial will soon end in joy,—

Peace and comfort you surely will gain.

For out of the shadow comes shine, little  
foot,

And after the pain comes relief.

Out of the evil come goodness and love,

And gladness swift follows the grief.

It is ever this way in all life, little foot.

God chasteneth whom He doth love

To make them more fit for the Kingdom of  
Heaven,

More eager for mansions above.

This torture to you is mysterious, strange.  
So it is with each one of God's ways.  
As through a glass darkly at present we see,  
But we shall know one of these days.

O think then how sweet it will be, little  
foot,  
When on errands of love you can go,  
And carry glad tidings of comfort and joy  
To others in bondage and woe!



**Partridges in November.**



## Partridges in November.

By permission of the *National Magazine*,  
Boston.

### I.

SILENTLY through the waving grass  
The little brown creatures, trembling,  
pass.  
Under the willows by the brooklet's side  
The little brown creatures, panting, hide.  
Over the fields in the dawning gray  
The little brown creatures speed away.  
Where sunbeams dance and dewdrops glis-  
ten  
The little brown creatures listen, listen!  
Where the dying goldenrod's feathers  
quiver  
The little brown creatures shake and shiver.  
Low on the grass where the leaves lie dead  
The little brown creatures go to bed.

Weary and worn they slumber, but—  
With only *one* of their optics shut.

The little brown creatures are hushed with  
fear,

For they know that danger and death are  
near.

Death in the sunshine, death in the shadow,  
Death in the forest, death in the meadow.

Death in the boulders, death in the bushes,

Death in the grasses, death in the rushes,

Death in the valley, death on the hill,

Death in the river, death in the rill,

Death in the rain, death in the breeze,

Death in the flaming forest trees.

Just how they can know is hard to tell,  
But the little brown creatures know full  
well,

(Though they never pause to wonder why,)  
That the hour of their doom is drawing  
nigh.

And the little brown creatures sigh and  
grieve,

For the world is too fair, too sweet to  
leave!

## II.

Stealthily over field and bog  
The Enemy comes with gun and dog!  
And O, such a roar, such a tumult is heard  
That even the grand old trees are stirred!  
And the little brown creatures so timid, so  
shy,  
They tremble and scream, they flutter and  
fly.  
In the forest confusion and panic reign.  
Where was peace now is war with its hor-  
ror and pain.  
Let pitying tears be solemnly shed!  
Let a dirge be sung and a prayer be said!  
The little brown creatures are dead, dead,  
dead!



## The Deserter.



## The Deserter.

By permission of the *Christian Observer*.

THE sun set in the gorgeous west,  
The day, reluctant, died.  
Out in the crimson evening light,  
Across the lawn so wide,  
An old man and a little maid  
Walked slowly side by side.

High above in the summer sky  
The stars came one by one,  
And shed their light on the darkened earth  
Which mourned the absent sun.

Sudden across the glistening dome,  
With one swift glowing ray,  
A meteor flashed. It hastened on  
To join the lifeless day.  
“O, dran’pa, see!” the child exclaimed  
“One ’tar has runned away!”



**My Lady.**



## My Lady.

**A**MONG the blossoms that she loved my lady lies.

There are no marks of tears about her shadowed eyes,

No signs of toil upon the little hands that rest

Like snow-white lily-blooms across her peaceful breast.

Her brow gleams softly underneath her glistening hair.

No lines of woe and agony are written there.

Upon her lips so sweet, so smiling, so serene,

No touch of sadness or of suffering is seen.

Awed by the angel-beauty of her perfect face

Which bears of grief and bitterness no faintest trace,

Those who so deeply loved her linger at her side,  
And wonder, sobbing, why it was my lady died.  
For only Christ, the Christ of Pity, understands  
That hidden there beneath those little folded hands  
A pulseless heart all broken, bleeding,  
bruised and torn,  
Bears witness to the many sorrows she has borne.  
None but the Christ, the Christ of Tender Love, can feel  
The anguish she has felt, and none but Christ can heal.

**"Of Such is the Kingdom of Heaven."**



“Of Such is the Kingdom of Heaven.”

By permission of the *Christian Observer*,  
Louisville.

**H**ERE lilies nod their stately heads  
And maples cast their shade,  
And where the rose its fragrance sheds,  
The little boy was laid.

Around the cross which marks the place  
The honeysuckle vine,  
The myrtle and the clematis  
Their clinging tendrils twine.

Beside him as he lies asleep  
The soft-eyed daisies wave.  
By night, by day, a watch they keep  
About his lonely grave.

The joyous butterflies flit past  
On trembling gauzy wings,  
And in a bride'swreath bush nearby  
The robin sways and sings.

The crystal dewdrops sparkle there  
When comes the break of day.  
Among the myrtle leaves at noon  
The laughing sunbeams play.

At eventide, when sets the sun,  
The tender breezes sigh,  
And o'er the hallowed spot at night  
The golden moonrays lie.

Sometimes when I am sorrowful  
And teardrops dim my vision,  
Into my lonely yearning heart  
God sends a dream Elysian.

And in this Heaven-sent dream I see  
A broad and shimmering river  
Whose healing waters gently flow  
Forever and forever.

Along the sloping river-banks  
Grow God's unchanging trees.  
Celestial flowers of matchless hues  
Bend in the perfumed breeze.

Upon the further shore I see  
A shining white-winged band,  
And One, most glorious of all,  
Holds in His Own thy hand.

I see him lift thee in His arms,  
And on his sacred breast  
In faith, in joy, in peace, in love  
Thy little head doth rest.

O angel-child! On earth we faint  
In sin and darkness, while  
It is thy privilege to live  
In the sunshine of His smile!

So sad are we! Yet we would not  
Call thee to earth again.  
We would not have thee know the world,—  
Its sin, its grief, its pain.

So while triumphant hosts rejoice  
And spirit-anthems ring,  
Sing on, O little angel voice,  
Thy praises to the King!



## The Garden of the Sky.



## The Garden of the Sky.

By permission of the *National Magazine*,  
Boston.

THEY say I shall not live to see the  
spring;  
That I shall never more behold  
The beauty of my garden as bud and leaf  
unfold  
In token of a glorious blossoming.

They say that I shall never live to see  
The radiant morns, the azure noons,  
The tender springtime twilights, the golden  
    springtime moons,  
Nor hear the flashing bluebird's melody.

No more will hyacinths their perfume  
    spread,  
Or lilies of the valley wake.  
The violets and windflowers, that blos-  
    somed for my sake,  
Will lift their heads in vain when I am  
dead.

No more will peachblows blush or lilacs  
wave.

The music of the wind and rain,  
The laughter of the sunshine I shall not  
know again

When hidden in the darkness of my grave.

I shall not miss this gladness when I die,  
For blossoms fine and blossoms fair,  
Of rich and fadeless splendor await my  
coming there

Within the wondrous Garden of the Sky.

I shall forget the bluebird's little song.  
Through heavenly spaces I shall hear  
The holy angel-anthems, too vast for mortal  
ear,

Majestic, grand, divinely sweet and strong.

I shall forget the sunshine laughter soon,  
The joyous beauty of the earth,  
The wind and rain of April, the Maytime  
moon and mirth,  
In that Fair Land which needs not sun and  
moon.

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